



**2017 OFFICIAL RULES FOR
BNWV TOURNAMENTS
EFFECTIVE January 1, 2017**

The following rules shall apply to all BNWV Nation tournaments, with the following exceptions: (i) rules for special tournaments may differ from those contained herein and (ii) these rules may be changed by BNWV immediately upon notice by BNWV to its members, which notice may be published on the BNWV internet site at www.wvbassnation.org. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director or his/her designee at a tournament. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director or a rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Subject to the appeal process set forth in paragraph 21 below, the decision of the Tournament Director, his/her designee, or the rules committee, shall be final in all matters.

C1. Penalties for rules violations may include the following:

- a) reduction of competition hours as determined by the Tournament Director b) loss of one or more fish in question. All such fish must be marked verified by either your partner/observer. If not verified the entire catch may be disqualified.
- c) loss of catch for the day of the violation
- d) disqualification from the tournament in question
- e) disqualification from future BNWV events, which may be from a specific number of events, a specific period of time, or may be a lifetime disqualification.
- f) any different or additional penalties determined by the Tournament Director.

1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:

(i) This tournaments are open only to current members of BNWV who are 16 years of age or older (except where approved my tournament committee), who are active members of the BNWV state chapter.

Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of potential competitor. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is disabled in such a manner as to unfairly hinder his/her partner or endanger the safety and well-being of his/her partner or themselves shall not be eligible.

It is recommended each contestant have an endorsement of having passed a boating safety course or grandfathered by law. Failure to do so may prevent boating on tournament waters. Boating safety courses are available online.

(ii) DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY BNWV TOURNAMENT, NO COMPETITOR MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT COMPETITOR HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A MINIMUM OF \$300,000 PER OCCURRENCE BOAT OWNERS LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERING THE BOAT BEING USED IN THE TOURNAMENT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER ALL PASSENGERS IN THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED AND ANY COMPETITOR WHO DOES NOT HAVE PROOF OF IN-FORCE INSURANCE WITH \$300,000 COVERAGE MAY BE DISQUALIFIED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW AN EFFECTIVE START AND EXPIRATION DATE. Tournament officials have sole authority to determine if insurance policies meet BNWV requirements.

(iii) A PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE BNWV DEPARTMENT ON OR BEFORE THE APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE. The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date.

2. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT

Anglers participating in any BNWV sanctioned event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a manner becoming of professional anglers that will not reflect unfavorably on BNWV its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors.

To this end, anglers shall use their best efforts to demonstrate professionalism and integrity in support of the sport of professional fishing. Any angler who violates any of the provisions of the Angler Code of Conduct may be subject to fines, forfeiture of tournament winnings, suspension from competing in individual BNWV sanctioned events, permanent ban from competition, or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by BNWV.

3. PRACTICE AND COMPETITION:

(i) During the official competition days of the tournament a competitor may not make cell calls for the purpose of locating or catching fish on tournament waters. Cell phones may be used for emergency situations. Competitors are allowed to call lockmasters for locking purposes only.

Competitors are allowed to use smart phones for global maps, weather, power generation, tidal charts, notes, etc., however using smart phones during competition to log into daily tournament blogs is not permitted.

(ii) A designated tournament official must be granted access to the competitor's boat at any time during the official practice or competition days. Failure to grant such access may result in immediate disqualification.

(iii) Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director immediately any violation or infraction of any Tournament Rules. Failure to report violations or suggestions to another competitor that they violate these Rules or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause for disqualification. **OFFICIAL PROTESTS MUST BE FILED IN WRITING WITHIN 15 MINUTES OF SCALES CLOSING AND ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST WILL BE PROVIDED A COPY.**

By his/her signature on the official tournament entry form, each competitor agrees to submit to a truth verification test and abide by its conclusion. The BNWV Tournament Director, rules committee or such person designated by the Tournament Director shall have the discretion to determine the need for a truth verification test. The BNWV. Tournament Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for selecting an independent expert to administer and interpret the results and establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions which may be asked during the test. The BNWV Tournament Director or his/her designee shall have sole responsibility selecting the location, date, and time of the test, with respect to all concerned parties schedule and travel cost. The competitor shall make himself/herself available at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such test. Anglers taking a truth verification test may be responsible for any and all costs incurred.

Random truth verifications tests may be administered on site during the course of a BNWV Event.

4. REGISTRATION: Each competitor must register in person with the official BNWV staff at the time and place designated in the schedule of events. Any competitor, who has not contacted the BNWV Nation Tournament Staff 15

minutes after the closing of the posted on-site registration period, may be disqualified from participating in the tournament. It shall be each competitor's responsibility to either check the schedule of events for registration time and location or obtain times from the BNWV Tournament Department.

5. SAFETY:

(i) Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by competitors. During the **official practice and competition**, each competitor must wear a Coast Guard-approved **chest-type** life preserver anytime the combustion engine is in operation. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely, and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Inflatable life vest indicators should be checked daily. Violation of this rule may be reason for disqualification. *Inflatable PFD's are allowed as long as U.S. Coast Guard regulations are met. The Coast Guard requires that inflatable PFD's must be worn at all times unless there is an equal number of non-inflatable Coast Guard approved PFD's on board.*

It is suggested the boater have a safety check with the non-boater each day prior to launch to familiarize the location of all safety equipment.

(ii) When boating in low visibility situations i.e. fog, heavy rain, during both practice and competition, competitors must operate their boats at a safe speed and in a safe manner as determined by tournament officials.

(iii) Radar units permanently mounted in the boat, subject to approval by BNWV may be approved for competition.

(iv) Tournament officials have the right to delay, shorten or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. Weather delays on full field days resulting in half of the tournament day being lost (first flight take off and check in) shall result in cancellation.

(v) *BNWV reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Director.*

(vi) **IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, COMPETITORS SHOULD CALL 911 FIRST AND ONCE SAFE THEN NOTIFY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

(vii) **COMPETITORS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE BOAT AND SEEK SAFE SHELTER IN BAD WEATHER WHERE DANGER MAY BE IMMINENT.**

6. SPORTSMANSHIP: Competitors in BNW tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for

disqualification.

over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the official practice or during the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future BNWV tournaments. No alcoholic beverages, other non-prescription stimulants or depressants shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days, or when in the weigh-in area.

(ii) **Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification.**

(iii) All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. Competitors are responsible for research of fishing and boating regulations.

(iv) Chemical-substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and/or for disqualification after circumstances are reviewed by the Tournament Director. Any disqualification, suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation in a BNWV tournament and/or for disqualification from a BNWV tournament after circumstances are reviewed by the Tournament Director.

7. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT: Use of grippers for landing bass is prohibited during tournament competition. During practice and competition no more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line at one time. One lure is defined as a single manmade device designed to attract and/or catch one fish at a time. Adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers, blades, etc., to a single lure is acceptable. If multiple fish are caught on a single manmade lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules (16). No “live bait,” “dead bait,” or “prepared bait” will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. **Any umbrella-type rigging, harness, or other device designed to hold more than one lure at a time – with or without hooks – is not allowed. Such rigging, harness, or device cannot be added to a single lure as described above.** Traditional twin arm spinnerbaits or buzzbaits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers must be on the main hook of the bait; only spinner blades can be affixed to the arms. The head on the main stem may be hinged. On these spinnerbaits or buzzbaits, no more than two wires, with a maximum length of 6 inches, may extend off the main arm or body of the lure. The “head and hook” portion of the lure must trail behind the blade or blades. BNWV officials have the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above.

Only ONE casting, spin casting or spinning rod (8-foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. A hung or snagged lure that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and may be set aside while another is in use. Other rigs as specified above may be in the boat ready for use; however, only ONE is permitted is use at any given time. If a competitor breaks his line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, he is allowed to make an attempt with the rod being used or with his hands to secure the visible line and land the fish for it to be counted as legal. He may NOT hook the line with another lure, rod and reel, or other device. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, to be counted as a legal fish, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked. With the mouth closed naturally, you must not be able to see where the hook point enters the fish to be considered hooked inside the mouth.

8. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER FOR ALL OUTBOARD MOTORBOATS USED IN OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT PRACTICE AND IN TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WILL BE 250 HP. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard. When required, each boat MUST have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must NOT exceed the rating specified on this plate or the horsepower maximum set by BNWV. Each competitor agrees to submit, by his/her signature on the official entry form, the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personnel, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance of engines is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of a competitor's engine to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden, and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower-rating numbers on the engine is also cause for immediate disqualification from BNWV tournaments. Posted speed limits and those imposed by BNWV must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner. Violations of speed limits shall result in loss of competition hours and not limited to disqualification.

9. BOAT AND MOTOR: These restrictions apply during official practice and competition. For the safety of all competitors, all boats must be equipped with an approved type operable ignition kill switch and lanyard. Only one manufactured lanyard may be used and it must be attached to the driver's body anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. *Co-angler must be seated with feet on floor (not deck) floor. Co angler can be seated on deck but feet must be on floor.* Fishing boats that are 16 feet or more in length may be used. Any raised platform or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. Standing on the outboard or seats while fishing is not allowed. An electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering. However, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.

All bladder tanks and any other type of auxiliary gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by a manufacturer's authorized dealer are permitted. Boats that do not have factory-installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. No portable gas tanks or containers capable of holding gasoline can be placed anywhere on the tournament waters or shoreline for use by any tournament competitor. No "barges" or similar craft will be permitted. No boat equipped with "stick steering" shall be permitted to be used by any competitor. "Stick steering" shall be as defined by the Tournament Director. Jet drive engines are not allowed during both official practice and competition.

10. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT: During official practice and competition, every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment and a functional bilge pump. During official competition, every boat must have live-well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive, a limit catch of bass by both competitors using the boat. BNWV recommends live-wells are maintained at full level and aerators/re-circulators on manual. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate. Boaters must make a back seat available for non-boaters each competition day.

11. BOAT IDENTIFICATION: Prior to each day's start, each boat may be given an inspection check by a tournament official. Each day, each boat may be given a number, which **must** remain with the boat. This number must be displayed upon the request of tournament officials, and at each check-in.

12. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE: A full discussion must be held between the two partners prior to a morning departure as to the schedule of boat operations. This schedule **must** permit each partner equal time to fish from the front of the boat and to operate the trolling motor, so as to afford each partner the opportunity to fish his/her selected waters an equal number of hours. Distance traveled to fishing locations must be considered in order not to deprive either partner fishing time while traveling to and from fishing waters. If a competitor waives the above rights, he/she shall retain the right to select the fishing waters for one-half the tournament day. Any competitor who, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his/her partner shall be disqualified. **The cost of gas and oil for the competition days must be settled within your own team.** In BNWV events where observers replace anglers as the official rider, observers cannot assist the competing angler in any way. Observers are not required to help with gas and oil expenses.

13. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the BNWV Tournament Director. Any water within these

boundaries posted “Off-Limits” or “No Fishing” by state or federal agencies as well as the live BNWV release area established by the Tournament Director will be **OFF-LIMITS** and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only that water open to **ALL** public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Waters deemed off limits by authorities or tournament officials should be treated like a wall. No boats or casting behind that boundary while fishing. All angling must be done from the boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in the tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate state or federal regulations. Prior to the tournament registration, any questionable areas must be brought to the attention of tournament officials to be considered tournament waters and may be announced in the briefing for all to hear unless determined otherwise by tournament officials. Tournament officials reserve the right to restrict or enhance tournament waters based on conversations with local authorities.

14. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT: During the competition days, competitors must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency or with permission from the Tournament Director. Exceptions spelled out in rules 5, 14 and 17. In such an emergency, or with permission from the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat to either a boat operated by other competitors or a rescue boat designated by the Tournament Director. Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and each other’s catch under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be scored in the tournament. In the event of a needed restroom break a refueling situation at a marina gas pump, contestants are allowed to leave the boat, at which time all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions, (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown), both competitors must cease fishing at this point, and their catch must be verified by a tournament official in order to be counted in the tournament. If, after the emergency situation is resolved by tournament officials, and enough time is left for the competitors to resume fishing, a **RESTART** will be allowed, the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his/her designee. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials.

Competitors are allowed to leave the boat to retrieve a lure. All fishing by that competitor must cease until back in the boat before making another cast.

15. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINTS: There shall be only one official check point for check-out in the morning, and one official check-in point in the afternoon, which points shall be designated at the tournament briefing. Failure to go through boat check and check-out in the morning or failure to check-in at the check-in point in

the afternoon may result in disqualification. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformity with all rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the numbers described in Rule 11 and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through the weigh-in process if both are weighing bass. Once bass are bagged for weigh-in, anglers that are not weighing bass do not need to accompany their partner through the weigh-in process.

16. SCORING: Tournament standings, contingency awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound and ounce weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 or 6 (team event) of the above species and varieties per day, unless otherwise specified by tournament officials. (example – hot weather/fish care concerns) At no time shall a competitor have in his or her possession more than the tournament limit. If a competitor determines they have over the limit they must immediately reduce his catch to the tournament limit with a live bass of their choice from their catch. Each returned bass will result in a 2 pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. In this case, competitors must attempt to notify tournament officials and if unsuccessful must notify officials at check in. Once a competitor checks in they must present all legal bass to tournament officials at the verification table. If competitors at the verification table have more than the tournament limit, the competitor will reduce with live bass to the tournament limit and each returned bass will result in a 2 pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director and announced at the Tournament Briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the official length, shall result in a penalty of 1 pound for each such bass, which penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials. After competitors check in at the official checkpoint they MUST present all LEGAL fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that competitor may not return to the boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. Culling tags or clips are allowed. Specially designed bags which increase survival rate will be furnished by the Tournament Director and must be used for the weigh-in.

17. CATCH AND RELEASE: CULLING OF DEAD FISH IS PROHIBITED. For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized 4 oz. to be deducted from their daily score. The Tournament Director or his designees shall have sole authority for assessing penalty points. In addition, the Tournament Director, or his/her designees, may reduce

tournament hours or tournament limits for fish care purposes. It is suggested in warm weather tournaments anglers keep extra ice for fish care. Contestants are allowed to purchase ice on the water; however they are not allowed to receive ice from non-contestants. Upon mutual consent between both competitors paired together, for fish care concerns, the verification table will open one hour prior to check-in time of the first flight. **SMALL DIP NETS FOR CULLING PURPOSES ARE ENCOURAGED.** It is recommended competitors keep all bass in live wells during the culling process. Placing bass on the boat carpet during culling is not an advised practice. Non penetrable culling clips are recommended. Proper fizzing technique is suggested when needed. For instructions on acceptable fizzing practices please contact tournament officials.

18. LATE PENALTY: Competitors who are not at the official check-in point, as described in Rule 15, at the appointed time, shall be penalized at the rate of 1 pound per minute late to be deducted from the total weight of his/her catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a “big bass award”. Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day’s catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case shall a competitor be allowed to make up “lost time.” After proper recognition at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site; however, all fishing must cease upon check-in. After the tournament begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during the tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing. It is each angler’s responsibility to confirm check-in times each day on the daily pairings.

19. TIES: In case of a tie for first place on a state team, division champion or overall champion at the end of the tournament that is not resolved by the following four (4) tie breakers there will be a sudden-death fish-off between the tied competitors, under the direction and special rules established by tournament officials.

All other team or individual ties, the following tie breakers will be used in the following order: (1) the heaviest single day catch during competition (2) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the second heaviest single day catch during competition. (3) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the largest number of legal fish weighed during competition; (4) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be largest number of legal **live** fish weighed during competition; For all places other than first place, If the tie is not broken by applying the foregoing procedures, the tie will remain a tie, and monetary prizes will be awarded in an equal amount between the tied teams or individuals. In the instance where merchandise is involved, prizes will be awarded as determined by tournament officials.

20. PAIRING OF COMPETITORS: Two competitors will be assigned to each boat. Wherever possible, no competitors from the same club will be paired. Announcement of your first-day fishing partner shall be made at the tournament briefing, which **MUST BE ATTENDED** by each competitor (unless given permission by Tournament Director). It will be

the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check-out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his/her sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the check-out point. When two competitors check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other and each other's catch throughout the day until the weigh-in; except in case of dire emergency (see Rule 14,15 and 17). A competitor must not allow any bass caught by them to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by BNWV.

21. RULES VIOLATIONS AND APPEALS COMMITTEE: An appeals committee will be established by BNWV which shall be comprised of the BNWV tournament committee. Appeals for penalties assessed under Rule C1 (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) must be presented in writing 48 hours from the time and date of ruling to the Tournament Director. Appeals hearings shall take place within seven (7) business days from the date of receipt of the written appeal and all parties must make themselves available at prescribed time of hearing. If competitors admit to a rules violation, they may not file an appeal of either the finding that they have violated the rules or the penalty imposed for the violation. Decisions of the appeals committee shall be final.

Competitors are allowed to compete under appeal however penalties assessed under Rule C1 (e) and (f) will remain until final ruling by Appeals Committee.

Appeals of non-competition rulings must be presented in writing to the Tournament Director within 48 hours from the time and date of ruling for review